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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
23 November 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Palestinian Arabs: A People in Search of a Country

Introduction

To a large degree, the failure to achieve a general peace settlement in the Middle East, sought now for more than 20 years, is rooted in the unsolved problem of the Palestinian Arabs. Like the other people in the area at the end of World War I, the Palestinians believed that they would be allowed to determine their own future, either as part of a greater Arab state or within the newly created British mandate. For its part, Great Britain, for a variety of reasons, had made commitments to Zionist leaders, proponents of a secular Jewish nationalism, to establish a national home for Jews in Palestine. Almost from the first days of its mandate in 1919, the UK was seized with the problem of controlling intermittent warfare between Jews and Arabs, with each people seeking to see its conflicting aspirations and demands realized.

Despairing of ever finding a solution to the problem of maintaining peace in the mandate territory, London in 1947 dropped the whole question in the lap of the United Nations. Anxious to placate both groups, the world organization decided to divide the mandate into two entities, Jewish Israel and Arab Palestine. On 14 May 1948, with the Zionists acting as midwife, Israel was born. Arab Palestine was not as fortunate, however. The armies of the surrounding

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Arab states, as self-appointed guardians, gathered on Palestinian territory to fight against Israel. When the fighting finally came to an end, what had not been conquered by Israel was under the control of Egypt and Jordan, and the Palestinians found themselves living as strangers in other Arab states.

Forced to sit on the sidelines during the better part of the next 20 years, while wars supposedly were fought in their name, some Palestinians finally moved to control their own destinies. In the wake of the June 1967 War, the heretofore moribund Palestinian resistance organizations--the fedayeen--began to carry the war to the Israelis, attempting to conduct guerrilla warfare both within the occupied territories and in Israel itself.

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The Fedayeen

1. Over the past three years, some 12,000 or more men and women--the fedayeen--have succeeded in becoming the most vocal spokesmen for the Palestinians. The movement is divided between extremists--radicals who seek to carry their struggle not only against Israel but to most of the Arab world as well--and moderates--those who would confine the struggle to Israel. But despite their differences the fedayeen are in agreement on one point. They seek the destruction of Israel as a sectarian Jewish state and the establishment of a Palestine state within the full confines of the old British mandate. This state, they allege, will be unitary, democratic, and nonsectarian. For the moment, the moderates are in the majority and are led by Fatah, whose membership constitutes one half or more of the entire fedayeen movement's strength.

2. Unlike the fedayeen of the 1950s and early 1960s, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the postwar fedayeen are to a great extent drawn from among highly educated zealots who believe their activity is the only solution to the plight of the Palestinians. Many of them have been educated at the American University of Beirut in medicine, law, and other professions. They gave up well-paying and secure positions in order to take up arms against Israel, and by 1969 they had succeeded in converting the Palestine Liberation Organization, the political organization created by the Arab League for the Palestinians, into a fedayeen-dominated body.

3. Their propaganda outpourings to the contrary, fedayeen leaders are aware that the movement does not offer a very significant military challenge to Israel and that it will not be able to do so for the foreseeable future. They also realize, however, that they have the capability either to involve Lebanon and Jordan more deeply in conflict with Israel or to pose a threat to those countries' efforts to arrange a peace settlement. They further

hope by their example to convince their fellow Palestinians and Arabs to take up arms in a popular war against Israel. They argue that they are willing to engage in this struggle, for decades if necessary, until the state of Israel is finally overthrown.

4. Much of the energy of the fedayeen has been dissipated in internecine struggles among the 30-odd groups into which they are divided and in conflicts with host governments such as Jordan. In attempts to prevent a recurrence of these struggles, the fedayeen themselves have sought to impose control and coordination upon all the groups. To a great extent, the efforts have failed because these organizations are unwilling to curtail their freedom of action.

5. The serious mauling of the fedayeen in the September-October 1970 shoot-out with the Jordanian Government, however, convinced a number of leaders that changes must be made. The radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which has alienated many of the other organizations by its refusal to take orders from fedayeen coordinating bodies, is now reported to be seeking to moderate its image and to cooperate with other groups lest it be crushed by the Jordanian Government.

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6. Both from a sense of frustration at seeing its policies of noninvolvement in politics fail when it was forced to bear the brunt of the Jordanian Government's recent attacks and from a desire to keep the more extreme elements in its fold, Fatah has continued its drift to the left. The rhetoric of the organization and its leader, Yasir Arafat, is becoming increasingly radical in tone and content. Whether a new unitary radical fedayeen organization will succeed in galvanizing the masses of Palestinians in the great popular crusade of the fedayeen remains

LOCATION OF PALESTINIANS
(as of July 1970)

<u>Area</u>	<u>UNRWA Registered</u>	<u>Not Registered</u>	<u>Total</u>
West Bank	272,692	392,308	665,000
Gaza	311,814	48,186	360,000
Israel	---	340,000	340,000
East Bank	506,038	193,963	700,000
Lebanon	175,958	74,042	250,000
Syria	158,717	11,283	170,000
Egypt	---	13,000	13,000
Saudi Arabia	---	20,000	20,000
Kuwait	---	85,000	85,000
Iraq	---	10,000	10,000
Other Arab States	---	5,000	5,000
Non-Arab States	---	37,000	37,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>1,425,219</u>	<u>1,229,781</u>	<u>2,655,000</u>

Age Distribution

15 years and older	1,608,930	60.6% of total
1 to 15 years old	990,325	37.3% of total
under 1 year old	55,755	2.1% of total

to be seen. Even at its peak of popularity among Palestinians just prior to US Secretary of State Rogers' peace initiative in June 1970, the fedayeen movement, with all of its regulars, irregulars, military and camp followers, did not number over 30,000. The great mass of the Palestinians, over 98 percent, have not let their sympathies lead them into any entanglement with the movement.

The Palestinians: A Profile

7. Before the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, there were some 1,280,000 Christian and Muslim Arabs living in Palestine; today their numbers have more than doubled to 2,655,000. This rapid increase is reflected in their age distribution, with fully 50 percent of the Palestinians being under 20 years of age and very likely under 15 years.

8. Although Palestinians are to be found in every state of the Middle East, they are concentrated in four main areas: Israel and Israeli-occupied territory, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Israel has over 50 percent of all the Palestinians under its direct control; some 340,000 are in its own prewar area, 360,000 are in the Gaza Strip, and 665,000 more are in the West Bank area. Jordan, where some 700,000 Palestinians form about 54 percent of the population, has the next largest agglomeration. Lebanon follows, with some 250,000 people who constitute over nine percent of the population. Syria has about 170,000 Palestinian refugees, while most of the others--approximately 170,000 people--have settled in the Persian Gulf states and in the United States.

9. Because of their age distribution, over 50 percent of the refugees are dependent on some form of assistance from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). This assistance ranges from no more than supplementary food in some cases to complete housing, food, clothing, and education in others. In the Gaza Strip, an estimated 214,000 people live in eight UNRWA-administered camps. Even

POPULATION OF UNRWA CAMPS

(as of July 1968)

AREA	CAMP		
GAZA STRIP	Dair el Balah	Deir-el Balah Maghazi	7,626 9,301 } 10,927
	Khan Younis	Khan Younis	20,619 } 20,619
	Nusairat	Nusairat Bureij	18,939 12,963 } 31,902
	Ratah	Ratah	46,293 } 40,293
	Rimal	Gaza Beach	33,432 } 33,432
	Jabalia	Jabalia	41,601 } 41,601
	Total		199,774
ISRAELI - OCCUPIED WEST BANK	Nablus	Askar Balata Far'a Camp No. 1 Nur Shams Tuikarem Jenin	5,079 7,875 3,718 2,502 3,006 6,140 6,026 } 34,346
	Jericho	Aqabat Jabor Ein Sulfar Nuweimeh	3,513 1,511 639 } 5,663
	Jerusalem	Shufat Ameri Dair Ammar Jalazone Kalandia	3,003 2,865 1,165 3,382 2,819 } 13,234
	Hebron	Dhoisheh Aida Beit Jibrin Fawwar Arroub	4,561 1,323 617 2,640 4,213 } 13,254
	Total		158,178
JORDAN	Amman	Jabal Hussein Amman New camp Zerka	31,555 40,597 16,785 } 72,152
	Irbid	Irbid camp	17,480 } 17,480
	Total		106,417
LEBANON	Emergency Camps	Baq'a Jerash Suuf Husn Marka Taibiyah (Zizia)	43,260 11,241 8,437 15,652 19,885 5,203 } 103,670
	Beirut Mountain	Mar Elias Burj el-Barajneh Shatila Jisr el-Bacha Dikwaneh Obayeh	889 7,169 4,892 1,236 7,403 2,448 } 24,057
	Saida	Mich Mich Ein el-Hilweh Nabatieh	1,871 17,029 2,947 } 21,847
	Tyre	Rashidieh El Buss Burj el-Shemali	10,016 3,911 7,111 } 21,086
	Tripoli	Nahr el-Bared Beddawi	10,073 5,445 } 15,521
	Beqa'a	Wavell	3,110 } 3,110
	Total		86,610
SYRIA	Damascus	Khan Esheh Khan Dan:un	5,398 2,828 } 8,226
	North	Neirab	7,247 } 7,247
	Homs, Hama	Homs City Hama	5,090 2,607 } 7,697
	South	Dera'a	2,088 } 2,088
	Total		25,258
	Emergency Camps	Sbeineh Qabr Essit Dera'a Jaramana	2,002 2,324 1,972 1,448 } 7,746
	Total		7,746

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here, those adults who are able to supplement their subsistence allowance by working in agricultural activities within Israel.

10. In the Jordanian West Bank area, about 74,000 Palestinians, an estimated 15 percent of the UNRWA-registered population, live in some 20 camps. As in the Gaza Strip, the refugees find it necessary to have a supplementary income. At present, the West Bankers are fortunate, as there is little if any unemployment among them. Some 25,000 men are employed within Israel as construction, farm, and industrial laborers, both skilled and unskilled; another 5-7,000 work in Jerusalem in the building trades. Israel's Ministry of Labor has established centers in the West Bank so that those seeking employment within Israel can obtain work permits.

11. In Jordan, an estimated 210,095 people reside in four regular and six emergency UNRWA camps. Little is known of the employment opportunities for these refugees, but job scarcity has contributed in part to the growth of the fedayeen movement. In Lebanon, about 88,000 people live in some 15 camps, while another 87,000 live in various shantytown settlements. There are another 74,000 people who have not been granted Lebanese citizenship but who have settled in cities. The camp dwellers find employment in construction trades, road building, and agriculture; the others work in agriculture as well as in trades and menial jobs in urban areas. Only 20 percent of the 170,000 refugees in Syria are in the country's ten regular and emergency UNRWA camps. Little is known of their employment opportunities or of the status of the other 140,000 registered refugees.

12. Some 170,000 refugees in Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf and other Arab states, and countries outside the Middle East have generally been able to integrate themselves into local societies. Perhaps even more successful are the additional

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35,000 Palestinians who have become full-fledged Lebanese citizens. For the most part, these expatriate Palestinians have developed such deep economic roots in their new countries that it is extremely unlikely they would ever contemplate leaving. However, these people do sympathize with the plight of the less fortunate Palestinians and argue against what they consider to be Israel's total disregard of the rights of Palestinians. Under heavy pressure--almost amounting to blackmail--they provide the fedayeen movement with a large share of its financial support.

The Palestinian Diaspora and Israel

13. To a great extent, the economic status of the various groups of Palestinians and their relative distance from Israel influence their attitudes toward Tel Aviv and the future of Palestinian-Israeli relations. Those individuals who have become integrated into local societies, for example, are anxious to see a peaceful solution of any kind as soon as possible so that they will not become more deeply involved with the fedayeen movement.

14. On the other hand, the nonintegrated refugees in Lebanon, both in and outside the UNRWA camps, are perhaps the most anti-Israeli of the people in the Palestinian Diaspora. Bitter, frustrated, and extremely hostile, they are encouraged by the "Successes" of the fedayeen, who have finally succeeded in focusing world attention upon the plight of the Palestinians. The refugees in Lebanon are convinced that the Palestinians now are the masters of their own destinies rather than the pawns of the various Arab powers. They will not be satisfied with such half-way measures as the establishment of a truncated state in the West Bank area, but seek rather the complete destruction of Israel as it exists today.

15. Although little is known of the attitudes of the refugees in Jordan, it is likely that their views parallel those of their brethren in Lebanon. Those who have been able to begin a new life favor

a peaceful solution to the problem, while the inhabitants of the UNRWA camps, having nothing to lose, look for the complete destruction of Israel so they can return to their lost properties.

16. Having spent the past three years under Israeli control and having viewed Tel Aviv's power at first hand, the Palestinians in the occupied territories are under no illusions regarding either the possible overthrow of the Israeli occupation or the destruction of Israel. This is not to suggest that they have become resigned to a continuation of the status quo. The majority--who, if one must pin a label on them, are moderates--seek a Palestinian state that would encompass both the West and East Bank areas of Jordan. They are willing at this juncture to postpone any decisions as to the future form of government, but most would accept the rule of King Husayn, provided Palestinians were given a greater degree of both national responsibilities and national benefits. Their first order of business remains, however, the withdrawal of the Israelis from all of occupied Palestine. Although they would be willing to allow the Israelis access to the Wailing Wall and to East Jerusalem in general, the West Bankers demand the incorporation of East Jerusalem into their Palestinian or Jordanian state.

Israel and the Occupied Territories

17. In the wake of its victory in the June 1967 War, Israel found itself with the task of governing nearly 1.4 million Palestinians. Aware that the rising tide of Palestinianism, as articulated by the fedayeen, might some day result in large-scale guerrilla warfare in the occupied territories, Israel has sought to reach some sort of understanding with the Palestinians concerning their future. Tel Aviv's efforts have been hampered, however, by an awareness that there is no realistic way of reconciling its own desires and those of the Palestinians. With military security an overriding concern, the Israelis are reluctant to allow the creation of a Palestinian entity

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that they could not control. Already faced with hostile Arab regimes on its borders, Tel Aviv fears that the establishment of a truly independent Palestinian state would only bring into being yet another enemy. Israeli strategists, among them Deputy Premier Allon, have therefore demanded that any such arrangement involving the West Bank must allow for the presence of Israeli-inhabited Nahals--fortified settlements--to defend Israel proper.

18. Meanwhile, in order to conduct the day-to-day administration of the occupied areas while maintaining a low profile, Israel has worked through the already existing Palestinian leadership establishment. Mukhtars (village headmen), notables, lawyers, religious functionaries, judges, former and present governmental officials are employed rather than imposed Israeli administrators. Even though the Palestinians regard these individuals for the most part as the corrupt, inefficient, and repressive minions of King Husayn's regime, the Israelis have tended to view them as the natural leaders of the West Bank. This in turn has diminished the acceptability of these men, who now are tainted as quislings.

19. Other natural leaders, such as professional men, who might be able to assume the mantle of the present establishment, have not had an opportunity to come forward. The fedayeen have been able to intimidate anyone advocating a solution other than the one they espouse. Israel's military occupation has likewise had a repressive influence on indigenous leadership; those Palestinians who have spoken out strongly against Tel Aviv's policies in the occupied areas are deported by military officials, while others, finding their political situation intolerable, have left of their own volition. Those who have remained, hoping to ensure their self-preservation, have decided not to commit themselves publicly.

Conclusions

20. Who speaks authoritatively for the Palestinians? At present, no one. They are a large

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amorphous mass of people, many of whose goals and beliefs still have not jelled. The Palestinians at this time do not have a recognized set of leaders, let alone one individual able to command universal attention. The basically negative nature of "Palestinianism," particularly as enunciated by the fedayeen, has contributed in no small measure to this situation. To date, moreover, the Palestinians have largely reacted to rather than initiated events in the area. The fedayeen movement is a reaction primarily to the inability of the armies of the Arab states to challenge the Israelis and regain the lost territories. What political activity there has been among West Bankers since 1967 has been in reaction to Tel Aviv's occupation, and the only goal the people can agree upon is the withdrawal of the Israeli forces. In Lebanon, the refugees' support of the fedayeen is a reaction to their inability to become a part of Lebanese society.

21. The absence of a comprehensive political program has also affected "Palestinianism." As a whole, even the fedayeen movement has only articulated a general goal--the destruction of Israel. Although they mouth a wide spectrum of slogans, ranging from Marxist to conservative, few fedayeen have given serious thought to their political goals other than the establishment of a "democratic secular state of Palestine," and even here they have no real conception of just what such a state would be. Other Palestinians have given even less thought to their future. The West Bankers are obsessed with Israel's occupation of the area and seek only to end it without any clear idea of what their political future should be thereafter.

22. To date, the fedayeen have been the only Palestinian voices heard. Not only have nonfedayeen Palestinians been intimidated by the fedayeen from speaking out and making their views known, but the news media have focused on the commandos as more newsworthy and photogenic. Despite such obstacles to any significant articulation of political goals--whether structural or ideological--there is a large

body of educated and professionally qualified Palestinians both in the Diaspora and the occupied territories who presumably could be reached over the head of their host governments and the fedayeen. Even if kept from initiating or formulating a positive political program by Israeli restrictions, by obstacles erected by their Arab hosts, or by fedayeen terrorism, these people are available as a sounding board for various external proposals for a postsettlement Palestinian nation. Over time, such soundings could evoke a sense of political consciousness among the nonradical Palestinians, and political leaders and groups might eventually emerge to articulate their own political programs.

23. In sum, the present circumstances of the Palestinians seem only to ensure against any early self-initiated formation of a stable Palestinian program or of a responsible Palestinian political entity.